Knowladge To Know Our Rich Heritage

Preserving Our Heriatge For future Generation

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nhc
National Heritage Council
SOUTH AFRICA
an agency of the
Department of Sport, Arts and Culture

Matlhonyana Village History Obstructed from our community Chief and Elders

Interviewing Mr. Maeco

Matlhonyane (sometimes spelled Matlhoyane) is a village situated in the **North West** province of **South Africa**, near the capital city of **Mahikeng**(formerly known as **Mafikeng**).It is primarily inhabited by **Setswana-speaking people**.

The village was formed around **1800**. This aligns with the broader history of **Sotho-Tswana settlements** in the **North West**, which have been documented as early as the **1600s**, with significant growth in sizable towns occurring during the late **18th century**.

Existance of Matlhonyane Village

The tribe of Matlhonyane clan was **roaming around** as they **stumbled across** the place where they saw a **river** and they **decided to stay there** for a while.

The elders continued and said; when they were swimming in that river they saw **‘’two eyes’’** inside the river, hence that’s why they named the place **Matlhonyane** till today.

The Origin of Totem

The slogan "**Namane ga Tholo**" is closely associated with the **Barolong clan** of the **Sotho-Tswana people**, who venerate the **Tholo (Kudu) as their totem**.

The elders continued and said: a man was **hiding** next to a Tholo and being **mistaken** for its offspring (Tholwana) during a c**onflict**—is a rich example of the varying stories that explain the **origin of totems**, other historical accounts offer **additional perspectives** on why the Tholo became a **respected symbol** for this **clan.**

Cultural and Historical Significance

The people are led by **"*Kgosi ke kgosi ka Setshaba*"** ("A king is a king by his people") remains a guiding principle. Traditional leaders like the **Kgosi** (Chief) or **Kgosigadi** (Female Chief) are responsible for protecting the community, mediating conflicts, and managing ancestral land.

During the 19th century, local Batswana leaders such as **Chief Montshiwa** (a contemporary of the founders during this era) had to use immense diplomatic. Skill to protect their autonomy from encroaching Boer and British interests.

. **Motsweding River**

Motswedi is particularly symbolic, as in **Setswana** it means "fountain" or "source," which perfectly aligns with their discovery of a life-giving river located in Matlhonyane.

Agriculture has always been a pillar of Batswana culture. They traditionally grew crops like **sorghum (mabele)** and beans, while also gathering medicinal herbs that required moist, nutrient-rich soil near riverbanks.

They are also famously known as the "People of the Cattle" (with cattle being a sign of wealth), **donkeys and horses** remain the backbone of rural logistics—pulling carts and carrying goods over long distances where modern vehicles might struggle

Matshepe Village History

In the vast landscape of the **North West**, where the heritage of the Batswana is etched into the very soil, lies the village of **Matshepe**. Since the **1800s**, this land—also known as **Masephe**—has been a sanctuary for a people whose lives were once measured by the size of their herds.

In those early days, the hills echoed with the sounds of **cattle, sheep, and goats**, marking a time of abundance and deep connection to the earth.

Matshepe Village is more than just a historical settlement; it is a guardian of tradition. When the winter air turns cold, the village prepares for the sacred season of **initiation**. It remains a place where young men and women are taught the values of their ancestors, ensuring that the flame of Tswana identity is never extinguished.

The bond between the people of **Matshepe** and the clans of **Matlhonyane** is visible in their shared ceremonies. When the drums begin to beat, the community rises in song and dance, their feet striking the ground in rhythms that have been passed down for centuries.

As families gather to share a meal of pap, samp, and the traditional taste of mophane

worms, they don't just eat—they remember. They remember that they are the descendants of the pioneers of the 1800s, and that the story of Matshepe is a story of a culture that refuses to be forgotten.

The village is widely recognized for hosting **Bojale and Bogwera** (traditional initiation schools), which serve as essential rites of passage for the youth.

The community shares deep-rooted customs and traditional ceremonies with the nearby clans of **Matlhonyane**, reflecting a shared heritage in the Mahikeng region.

The people of Matshepe are known for their love of Setswana traditional music and dance, including vibrant styles like **Setapa** or **Borankana.**

Ga-Mothakga Village History

Ga-Mothakga falls under the jurisdiction of Matlhonyane. This is why the name often does not appear on official maps, as the area is represented by the broader designation.

Ga-Mothakga was chosen by the local chief to address a specific community issue. The chief noticed that the people from this section did not attend community meetings and lacked seriousness regarding local affairs.

Consequently, he named the area. **Ga-Mothakga** translates to **"a place to relax"** or

"**to be at ease**," as a reflection of the residents' perceived attitude at that time.

Cultural Practices and Lifestyle

Historically, the community was highly self-sufficient and maintained traditional ways of life:

- **Subsistence:** Residents did not use money to purchase meat. Instead, they relied on their own livestock for food.
- **Transportation:** Horses and donkeys were the primary modes of transport for the village.

The Origins and History of Stlopo Village

The history of **Stlopo** dates back to the **1940s**. It originated near the **Molopo River**, a vital water source that supported the early community.

Agricultural Independence

The people of Stlopo were highly self-sufficient. They established their own **farms** along the river, where they planted and harvested their own food. This agricultural lifestyle allowed them to sustain themselves without relying on outside markets.

Traditional Medicine

During this period, there were no traditional healers or Western doctors in the immediate area. When people fell ill, they relied on their deep knowledge of the land, using **natural herbs** to treat sickness and maintain their health.

Craftsmanship and Material Culture

The community practiced a "no-waste" philosophy regarding their livestock and the animals they hunted. They were skilled in processing **animal skins** to create essential household and personal items:

- **Home Goods:** Skins were carefully cured and used to make durable **mats and carpets**.
- **Clothing:** The people crafted their own **shoes and clothes** directly from animal hides, ensuring they were well-equipped for their environment.